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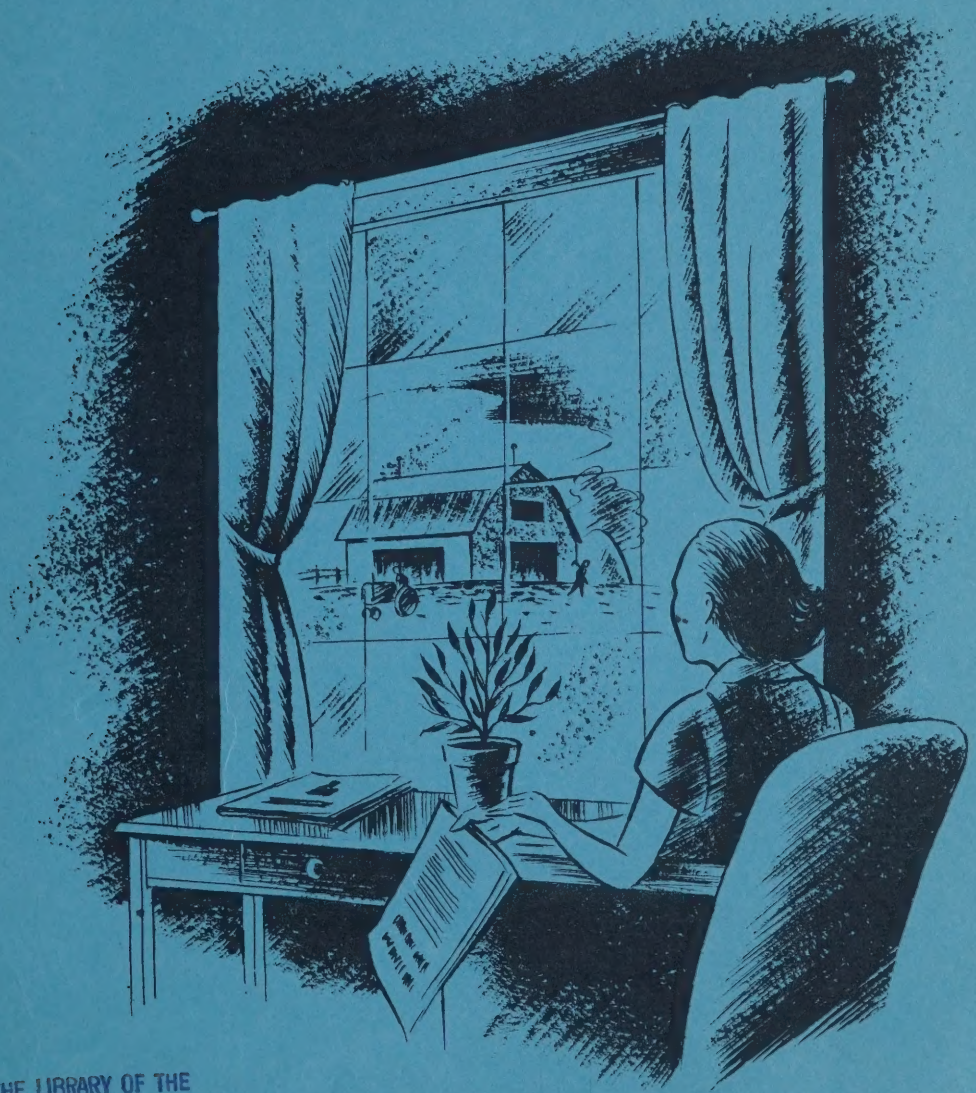
FARM FAMILY LIVING
IN
Nicolet County
QUEBEC



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FARM FAMILY LIVING IN NICOLET COUNTY, QUEBEC, 1947-48

M.A. MacNaughton, J.M. Mann and M.B. Blackwood

INTRODUCTION

In order to obtain information on farm family living, the Economics Division of the Dominion Department of Agriculture has been carrying on a number of studies in various parts of Canada.1/

It is hoped that these reports may bring to both farm and urban families a better understanding of farm family living in specific areas. The information may also be useful to extension and social workers, community leaders and to other persons and organizations working with farm families.

This report presents the results of a survey of farm family living which was carried out in Nicolet County, Quebec, in 1948.

1/ Edwards, F.M., Farm Family Living in the Prairie Provinces, Publication 787, Technical Bulletin 57, Economics Division, Department of Agriculture, Ottawa, Ontario, 1947.
MacNaughton, M.A., and Andal, M.E., Changes in Farm Family Living in Three Areas of the Prairie Provinces, from 1942-43 to 1947, Publication 815, Technical Bulletin 69, Economics Division, Department of Agriculture, Ottawa, Ontario, 1949.
Farm Family Living in Southeastern Saskatchewan, 1947-48, Economics Division, Department of Agriculture, Ottawa, Ontario, (to be published).
Farm Family Living in Lanark County, Ontario, 1947-48, Economics Division, Department of Agriculture, Ottawa, Ontario, (to be published).

METHOD OF STUDY

As indicated in Figure 1, Nicolet County is located about midway between Montreal and Quebec City in the province of Quebec. The St. Lawrence River forms the northern boundary of the county. A dairy combination type of farming predominates in the county; dairying is the major farm enterprise but on many farms it is combined with the production of hogs and beef cattle.

During the summer of 1948, 85 farm families were visited in the county. The enumerators interviewed the housewives and recorded the answers to a number of questions regarding various aspects of family living. The answers to these questions are summarized in this report.

The families included in the study were selected by using a modification of area sampling techniques. It was necessary to limit the sample to less than 100 families owing to limitations in time, money and personnel. Thus, it was decided that the sample should be drawn from specific areas within the county. Of the 25 parishes in the county, six were statistically selected in such a way that the probability of choosing any particular one was proportional to its size in terms of number of farms according to the 1941 Census. The locations of the six areas selected within the county are indicated in Figure 2.

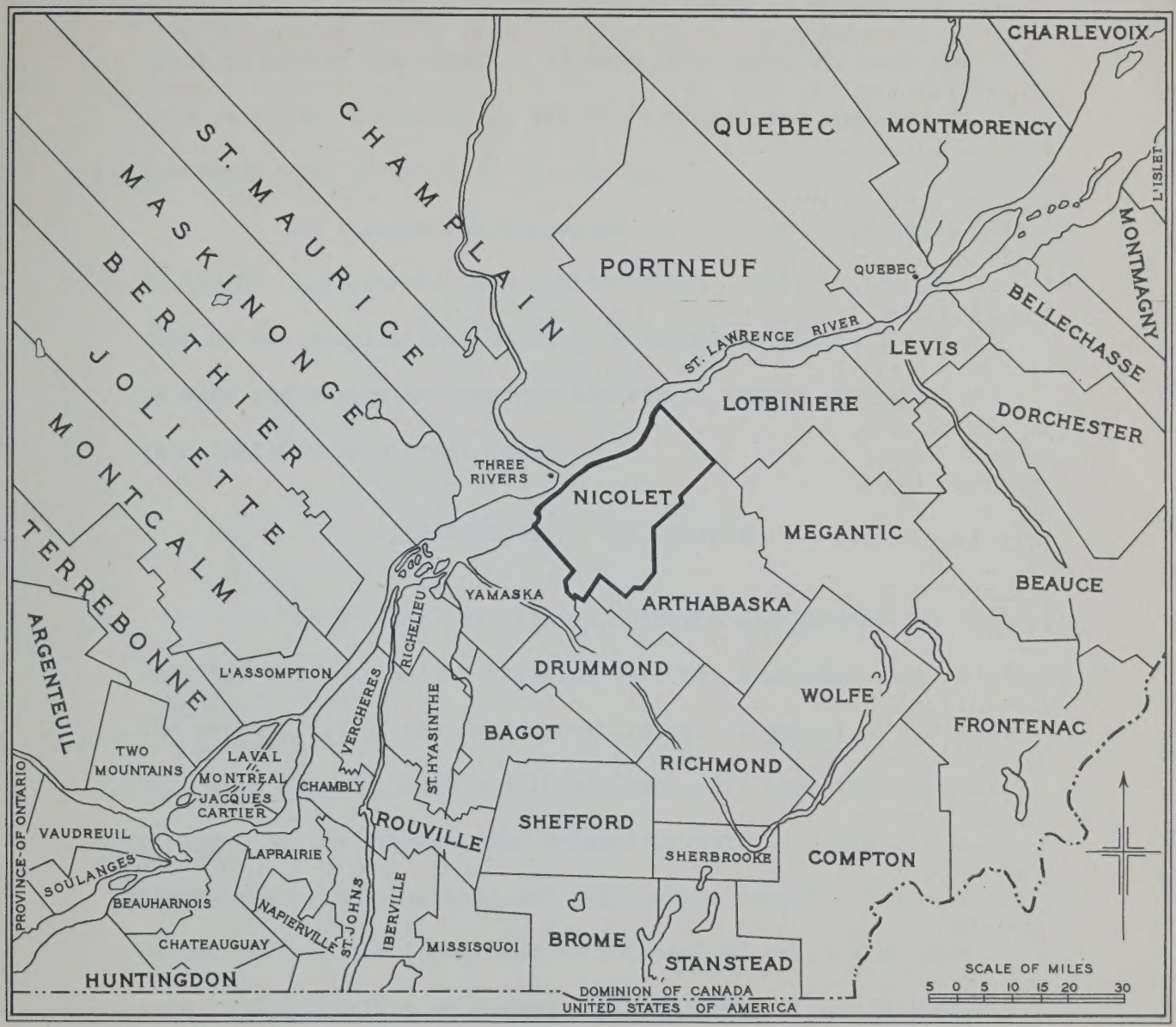

Figure 1. - Location of Nicolet County in the Province of Quebec

The sample was concentrated further in each of these six areas. Clusters of houses were selected at random. A map which indicated the location of each farm house was used for this purpose. The homes of the 85 farm families included in the study were selected by this method.

The information presented in this report pertains only to the 85 families who were visited since, owing to the small size of the sample, statistically reliable estimates could not be made regarding the numerous aspects of family living of all farm families in Nicolet County.

DESCRIPTION OF THE FAMILIES

The 85 families visited averaged six persons per family; only ten per cent of the families were not supporting any children. The average age of the farm operators was 49 years; 27 per cent were less than 40 years and 16 per cent were more than 60 years of age. On the average, the housewives were 45 years of age. Nearly all of the husbands and their wives were of French origin; 92 per cent of the former and 93 per cent of the latter were born in the Province of Quebec. The majority of the husbands had very little formal education; only four per cent had gone beyond grade eight; 11 per cent had completed only seven or eight

grades and the remaining 85 per cent had a grade six education or less. On the whole, the housewives had received more formal education than their husbands. Thirteen per cent of the housewives had more than a grade eight education and 15 per cent had not gone beyond grade seven or eight; the remainder had completed only six grades or less.

EXPENDITURES FOR FAMILY LIVING

The 85 housewives who were interviewed itemized the various goods and services used for family living during the twelve-month period extending from July, 1947 to June, 1948. It was estimated that total living expenditures averaged $2,049 per family. Figure 3 presents the distribution of these expenditures.

Farm-Furnished Goods and Services.- Every farm provided some goods and services such as, food, fuel and housing. Although direct cash outlays were not required for these items, it was estimated that average cash expenditures would have been increased by $566 per family if these goods and services had not been available. Non-cash expenditures, therefore, amounted to 28 per cent of total living expenditures.

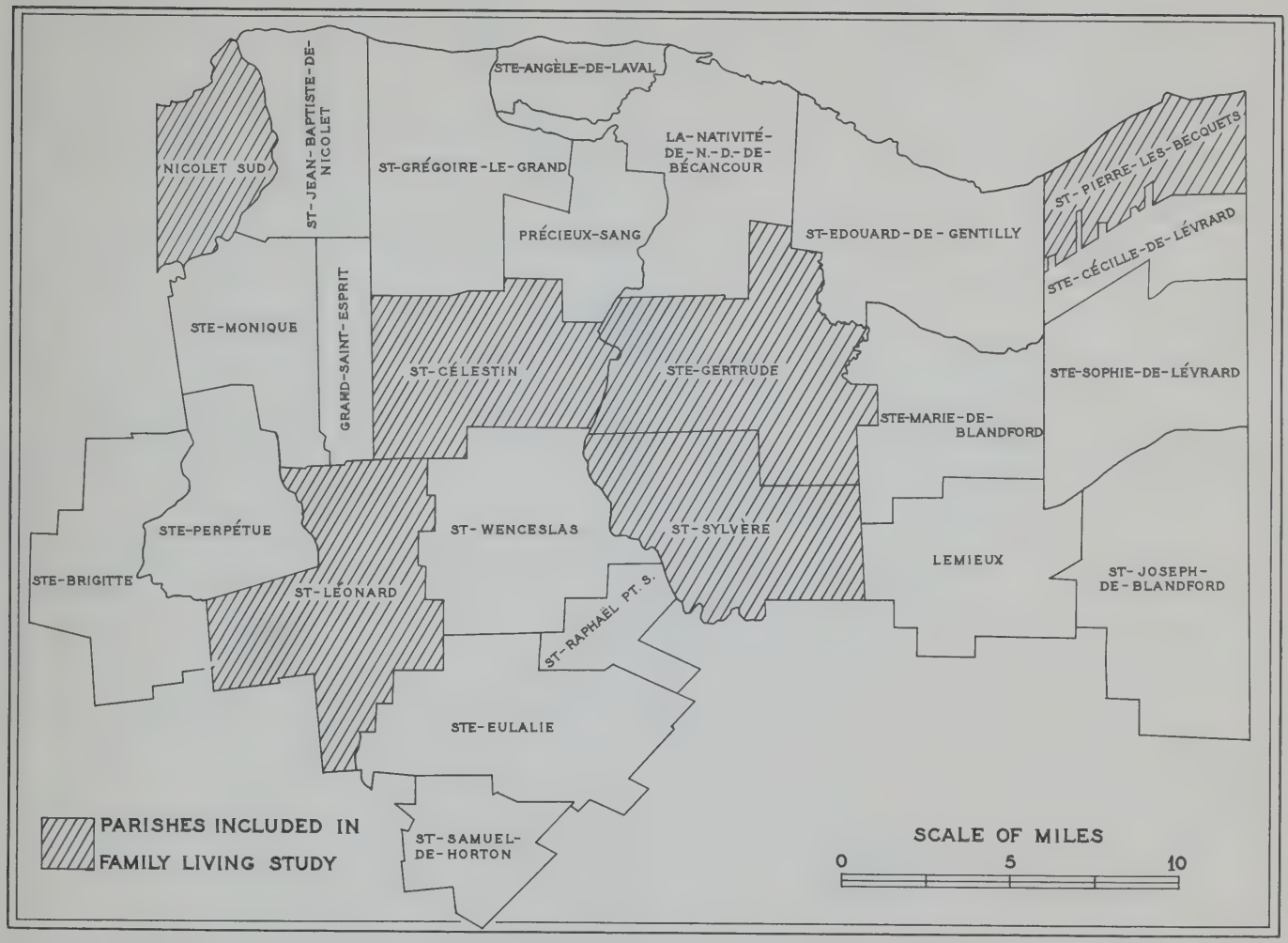

Figure 2. - Nicolet County, Quebec

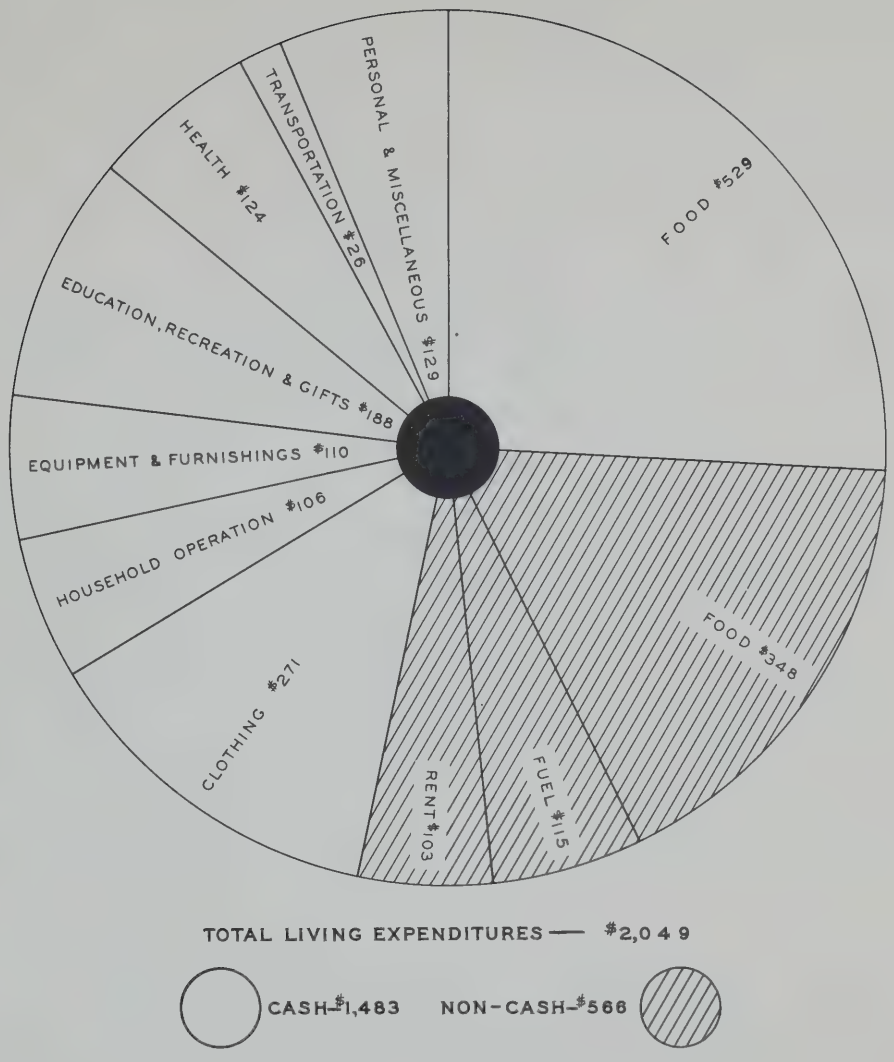

Figure 3. - Distribution of Total Living Expenditures

The food which the families had produced on their farms and consumed during the year was valued at an average of $348 per family and accounted for 61 per cent of the value of all farm-furnished goods and services.

All but ten per cent of the families obtained some fire-wood for home use from their farms. For all families, the average value of farm-furnished fuel was $115 per family or 20 per cent of the average value of all goods and services provided by the farm.

The use of the farm house for the year was assigned an average rental value of $103. The rental values of the homes were determined by the Economics Division in co-operation with officials of the Provincial Government who were well acquainted with the area. It was necessary to consider the use value of the house because its use contributed to the value of family living although a direct cash outlay for rent was not required. This non-cash expenditure accounted for the remaining 19 per cent of the value of the farm-furnished goods and services.

Food, Clothing, and Household Operation.- Although the families produced food for their own use to the value of $[illegible] per family, their cash expenditures for food averaged $529. Total expenditures for food (cash plus non-cash), therefore, averaged $877 per family or 43 per cent of total living expenditures. Cash outlays for food accounted for more than one-third, 36 per cent, of total cash living expenditures which averaged $1,483 per family.

Expenditures for clothing, averaging $271 per family, were about one-half as large as the cash outlays for food and amounted to 18 per cent of total cash living expenditures. Cash outlays for household operation including such items as lighting, telephone service,[1/] purchased fuel, paint and cleansers averaged $106, or seven per cent of total cash expenses. Altogether, cash outlays for food, clothing, and household operation amounted to 61 per cent of the average cash living expenditures of the 85 families. A distribution of cash living expenditures is presented in Figure 4.

Equipment and Furnishings.- On the average, the families spent $110, or seven per cent of their total cash outlay, for home furnishings and equipment. Thirty-nine per cent of the families had spent less than $50 but 19 per cent had spent more than $200. Slightly more than one-quarter of the families, 27 per cent, had purchased such items of equipment as washing machines, stoves and sewing machines.

Education, Recreation, and Gifts.- Thirty-nine per cent of the housewives reported that no direct cash outlays had been made for education. The educational expenses of the remaining 61 per cent of the families averaged $158 per family. Every family had some expenditure for newspapers, magazines or other reading material; the average outlay was $10.

1/ Only one-half of the cost of telephone service was charged to family living; the remainder was considered to be a farm business expense.

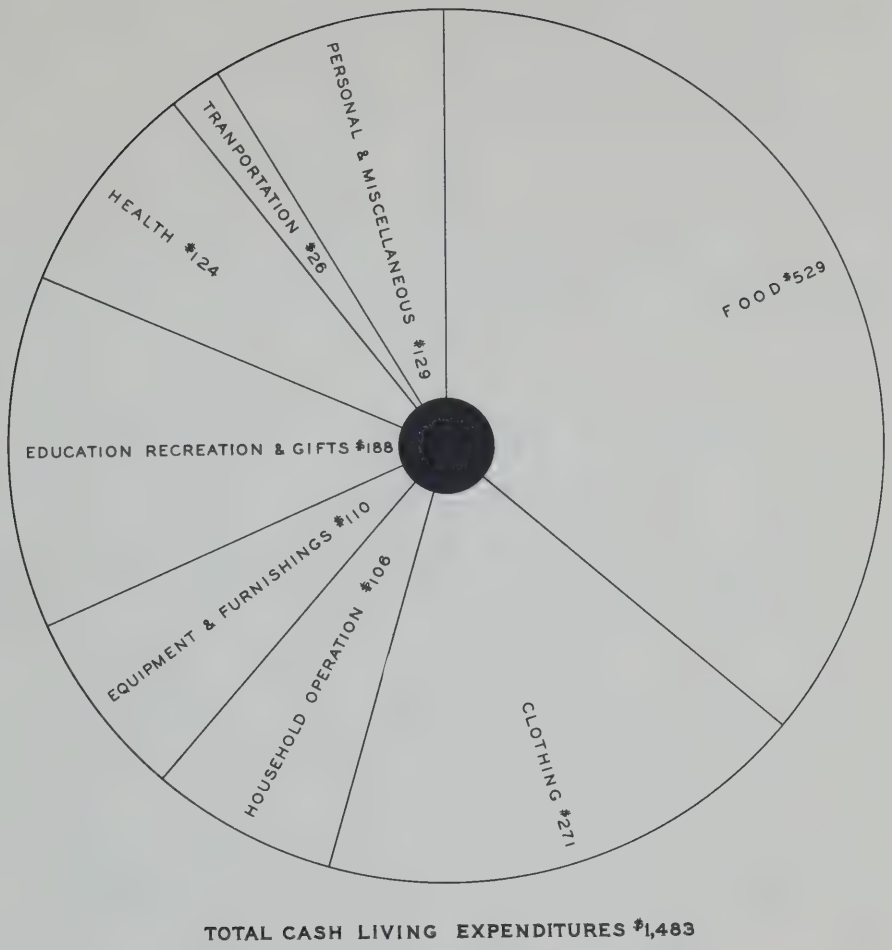

Figure 4. - Distribution of Total Cash Living Expenditures

Expenditures for recreation averaged $18 per family. Thirty-eight per cent of the families had expenditures for a vacation; their average outlay for this purpose was $28.

Donations to churches and charities and outlays for gifts averaged $64 per family. For all families, total expenses for education, recreation, gifts and donations to churches and charities averaged $188 or 13 per cent of total cash living expenditures.

Health.- Sixty-three per cent of the families had required the services of a doctor during the year; their average outlay was $70. Only 15 per cent had hospital bills; for these families this expense averaged $133 per family. Forty-five per cent had expenditures for dental work and 35 per cent had expenses for eye examinations or spectacles. Only two per cent of the families had outlays for health insurance. The average health expenditure of the 85 families was $124 or eight per cent of total cash living expenditures.

Transportation.- Only 14 per cent of the families owned an automobile; eight per cent owned a truck and one per cent owned both an automobile and a truck. Horses were used for transportation by some of the families;others hired taxis occasionally. The average outlay for transportation was only $26 per family.

Personal and Miscellaneous.- On the average, the families spent $85 for personal items such as, toilet articles, tobacco, and meals away from home. Miscellaneous expenditures for life insurance and other items averaged $44 per family. Together, personal and miscellaneous expenses averaged $129 or nine per cent of total cash living expenditures.

Expenditure Patterns.- The average expenditures of the 85 families have been described above. Although total living expenditures averaged $2,049 per family and cash living expenditures averaged $1,483, there were great variations in the outlays of the individual families in the group. It will be noted in Table 1 that 33 per cent of the families spent less than $1,500 for family living and that 23 per cent spent $2,500 or more.

Table 1.- Distribution of 85 Families by Expenditure Groups

Total Living	Families	
dollars	number	per cent
999 or less	7	8
1000 - 1499	21	25
1500 - 1999	22	26
2000 - 2499	15	18
2500 - 3000	7	8
3000 or more	13	15
Total	85	100

Table 2.- Distribution of Expenditures for Family Living, Classified by Expenditure Groups

Total Living Expenditures	Food	Clothing	Household Operation a/	Furnishings and Equipment	Education, Recreation, and Gifts	Health	Personal and Miscellaneous	Total
dollars	- per cent -							
999 or less	50	6	21	4	10	6	3	100
1000 - 1499	46	10	21	5	5	6	7	100
1500 - 1999	48	10	20	6	5	6	5	100
2000 - 2499	49	11	17	7	5	5	6	100
2500 - 2999	40	16	17	3	7	10	7	100
3000 or more	34	18	13	5	17	5	8	100

a/ Includes automobile operating expenses.

The expenditure patterns of the families with the higher expenditures were much different than those of the families with the lower expenditures. This information is presented in Table 2. As the total living expenditures increased, the proportions allocated to food and household operation decreased while the proportions allocated to other items increased. Although these changes were not consistent in each expenditure group, the trend is apparent.

FARM HOMES

Very few of the homes of the 85 families were protected against the weather by a shelterbelt of trees and only seven per cent had ornamental hedges. Thirty-four per cent of the families had flower gardens. The homes of 29 per cent of the families were separated from the barnyard by a fence but only nine per cent of the homes had entrance walks.

Only two per cent of the houses were built of stone or brick. Sixty-nine per cent were of frame construction and were painted or finished with brick veneer. The remaining 29 per cent were also of frame construction but were unpainted. On the average the houses contained 6.7 rooms and thereby provided one or more rooms per person in 62 per cent of the families. Nine per cent of the houses had no storm windows. Every house had a basement; 84 per

cent had basements which extended under the whole area of the house. The majority of the basements were bare excavations; only 15 per cent had either stone or concrete walls and floors.

Slightly more than one-quarter, 26 per cent, of the homes had a dining room in addition to a kitchen and 78 per cent had a separate living room. All but five per cent of the houses contained clothes closets. There was hardwood flooring throughout all or at least part of the homes of 68 per cent of the families. Thirty-one per cent of the homes had softwood flooring; only one per cent had rough, unfinished flooring. The kitchen floor in 73 per cent of the homes was covered with linoleum. In 15 per cent of the homes the kitchen floor was painted, varnished, or oiled but in the remaining 12 per cent the kitchen floor was unfinished. The living room walls in 32 per cent of the homes were plastered or finished with plasterboard which was painted or papered. The woodwork throughout the homes of 92 per cent of the families was either painted or varnished.

Twenty-six per cent of the houses were heated by a furnace or space heater in the basement and 15 per cent were heated by a space heater which was installed in one of the rooms. In the remaining 59 per cent of the homes the kitchen stove was the only source of heat. More than one-half of the families, 58 per cent, had electric lighting in their homes; 14 per cent used gasoline or kerosene mantle lamps but wick lamps were still being used exclusively by 28 per cent of the families.

The homes of 50 per cent of the families were provided with running water. Forty-two per cent of the families obtained water from wells which were equipped with hand pumps and four per cent had windmills or engines for pump operation; only four per cent of the families were still using ropes and pulleys for drawing water from their wells. Four per cent of the houses had built-in cisterns. This facility was not considered essential by most of the families because in many cases there was a well in the basement.

Nearly every house, 98 per cent, had a kitchen sink which was equipped with a drain pipe. Seventeen per cent of the homes had a bathroom but only 11 per cent had a bathtub or shower. More than one-third, 34 per cent, of the houses had flush toilets.

Only two per cent of the families had mechanical refrigeration and only eight per cent had an icebox or an ice well; the remaining 90 per cent did not have any refrigeration facilities. The majority of the housewives had washing machines; 64 per cent had power-operated machines and 28 per cent had hand-operated washers but eight per cent did the washing by hand. Ninety-eight per cent of the housewives had sewing machines. Other items which were common to the majority of the homes were these: dining room buffet or china cabinet (65 per cent), chesterfield or lounge (61 per cent), and easy chair (56 per cent).

LEVEL OF LIVING

The level of living attained by a group of families cannot be measured solely in terms of their expenditures for family living, particularly when information regarding these expenditures is available for only one year. There may be important differences in the spending habits of individual families owing to differences in their preferences for goods and services which would result in marked differences in their levels of living. The material or cultural acquisitions which families possess are more accurate indicators of their levels of living. These acquisitions reflect both the social and economic status of a family since possessions acquired in one year may be retained by the families for a number of years and, even in periods of depression when living expenditures may be low, contribute to the level of living of the family.

In a previous study,[1/] a scale was devised for measuring the levels of living of 622 farm families located in the prairie provinces. In order to construct the scale, an extensive inventory was taken of the material and cultural acquisitions such as furnishings, equipment, musical instruments and books which the families possessed. The inventory items were statistically tested and those which differentiated between living levels were retained to form the level of living scale.

1/ MacNaughton and Andal, op. cit., p. 46.

Twenty-seven items proved to be significant.1/ All of these items were given equal weight. The level of living of a family as measured by this scale, therefore, was indicated by a score out of a total possible score of 27.

The same scale was used to measure the level of living of the 85 families included in this study. Thirty-nine per cent of the families had level of living scores of less than 15 but 25 per cent had scores of more than 20. The average level of living score of the 85 families was 16. Table 3 presents a distribution of the families by level of living score groups.

Table 3.- Distribution of 85 Families by Level of Living Score Groups

Level of Living Score	Families	
	number	per cent
0 - 9	9	11
10 - 14	24	28
15 - 19	31	36
20 - 24	17	20
25 - 27	4	5
Total	85	100

1/ The 27 items are listed in the Appendix, pp. 24-26.

There was a relationship between the total living expenditures of the families and their level of living scores. The families who had the lower expenditures had the lower level of living scores and conversely, the families who had the higher expenditures for family living had the higher level of living scores. The families who had the lower scores allocated a greater proportion of their total expenditures to food and a smaller proportion to clothing, furnishings, education and recreation than the families who had the higher level of living scores.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES AND SERVICES

Community facilites and services were readily available to most of the 85 families. The homes of 88 per cent of the families were located adjacent to a gravel road; for all homes, the average distance to a gravel road was less than half a mile. The accessibility of various facilities and services is summarized in Table 4.

The average distance of the homes from a church and community hall was only three miles. The average distance to a doctor was also three miles; 15 per cent of the homes were more than five miles from a doctor. Hospitals were farther away; the average distance was 17 miles but 28 per cent of the homes were more than 20 miles from a hospital.

Table 4.- Average Distance of Farm Homes from Various Facilities and Services

Facility or Service	Distance
	miles
Gravel road	0.2
Post office a/	2
School	2.5
Church	3
Community hall	3
Swimming place	3
Doctor	3
Shipping point	4
Dentist	8
Source of "good" clothes	8
Theatre	8
Optometrist	14
City	16
Hospital	17

a/ Eighty-two per cent of the homes were located on a rural mail delivery route.

RECREATION AND SOCIAL PARTICIPATION

The families spent much of their spare time in their homes, listening to their radios, reading, or visiting with their friends and neighbours. Although the majority of the families participated in community organizations, less than one-half of them attended social functions such as, picnics, country fairs and concerts.

Recreation in the Home.- Thirty-six per cent of the housewives and 44 per cent of the household heads reported that they devoted

a total of four or more hours per week to reading. Most of their reading was confined to newspapers, magazines and other periodicals. Sixty-eight per cent of the families received a daily newspaper and 15 per cent received a weekly newspaper. Agricultural papers were subscribed to by 85 per cent of the families and 22 per cent subscribed to magazines.

There were very few books in the majority of the homes. Forty-nine per cent of the families did not have any books in their homes; only six per cent had 100 books or more. Table 5 presents a distribution of the families according to the number of books they possessed. Although 70 per cent of the families reported that library facilities were available to them, only six per cent obtained books from a library.

Table 5.- Number of Books in the Homes of 85 Farm Families

Number of Books	Families	
	number	per cent
None	42	49
9 or less	3	4
10 - 24	25	29
25 - 49	5	6
50 - 99	5	6
100 or more	5	6
Total	85	100

Ninety-four per cent of the families had a radio in their homes and they considered that this was an important source of information and entertainment. There was a piano in 22 per cent of the homes; at least one member of 27 per cent of the families played some other musical instrument.

Nearly every family had entertained visitors during the year; 70 per cent had entertained visitors on more than 20 occasions. Only seven per cent of the families had not visited away from home; forty-nine per cent had visited away from home more than 20 times.

Participation in Organizations.- Only 18 per cent of the families did not belong to any community organization. At least one family member in the remaining 82 per cent of the families belonged to an organization. The household heads were more active in organizations than the housewives; 76 per cent of the former and 64 per cent of the latter were members of at least one organization. Thirty-four per cent of the families had sons and 29 per cent had daughters who were members of one or more organizations.

Other Activities.- Every family member over 16 years of age had attended church more than 20 times during the year. In 38 per cent of the families some of the children under 16 years of age did not attend so often.

More families had attended fairs than any other social event. Forty per cent of the families had attended at least one fair during the year and in most cases it was an outing for the whole family. Only 16 per cent of the families had attended a picnic. Concerts had been attended by 16 per cent of the families. At least one member of 31 per cent of the families had gone to picture shows. Although only 11 per cent of the families had members who had attended public dances, many families enjoyed this form of recreation in their homes with their friends and neighbours. Only 13 per cent of the families had attended any educational meetings. Athletic events were attended by members of 13 per cent of the families.

ATTITUDES TOWARD FARM LIFE

The housewives who were interviewed were asked to state their opinions regarding farm life. Many of the housewives felt that general structural repairs to the house and additional home conveniences would make their work more pleasant and enhance their appreciation of farm life. However, all but one of the housewives liked farm life and stated that they would rather live on a farm than in a town or city. Many of them preferred farm life because they felt that they were more independent on a farm than in an urban centre. Others believed that a farm was a better place than a town or city for bringing up children.

SUMMARY

During the summer of 1948, 85 farm families were visited in Nicolet County, Quebec. Ninety-two per cent of the household heads and 93 per cent of the housewives were of French origin. Their average ages were 49 years and 45 years, respectively. On the average, there were six persons per family. The majority of the household heads and housewives had received little formal education; only 15 per cent of the former and 28 per cent of the latter had completed seven or more grades.

Total expenditures for family living averaged $2,049 per family during the twelve-month period from July, 1947 to June, 1948. The value of the goods and services provided by the farms averaged $566 per family. A direct cash outlay, therefore, was not required to meet one-third of the total living expenditures. More than one-third, 36 per cent, of total cash expenditures, which averaged $1,483 per family, was spent on food, 18 per cent on clothing, seven per cent on household operation, seven per cent on equipment and furnishings, 13 per cent on education, recreation, and gifts, eight per cent on health, two per cent on transportation and nine per cent on personal and miscellaneous items. The families who had lower total expenditures spent a larger proportion of their total outlay on food and a smaller proportion for other items than the families who had higher total expenditures.

The majority, 97 per cent, of the houses were of frame construction; 69 per cent were painted or finished with brick veneer. On the average, the houses contained 6.7 rooms and thereby provided one or more rooms per person in 62 per cent of the families. Although every house had a basement, 85 per cent were only bare excavations; the remaining 15 per cent had either stone or concrete walls and floors.

A furnace or space heater in the basement provided heating in 26 per cent of the homes; an additional 15 per cent were heated by a space heater in one of the rooms. In the remaining 59 per cent of the homes the kitchen stove was the only source of heat. More than one-half of the families, 58 per cent, had electric lighting in their homes; 14 per cent used gasoline or kerosene mantle lamps but 28 per cent were still using wick lamps exclusively.

Fifty per cent of the homes were provided with running water. Nearly every home, 98 per cent, had a kitchen sink equipped with drain pipes. Although only 11 per cent of the homes had a bathtub or shower, slightly more than one-third had flush toilets.

Only ten per cent of the families had any refrigeration facilities. The majority of the housewives had either a power or hand-operated washing machine; only eight per cent did the washing by hand.

The level of living of the 85 families was measured by a socio-economic scale. Their average level of living score was 16 out of a total possible score of 27. The families who had lower level of living scores had lower expenditures for living and conversely, the families who had higher scores had higher expenditures. A larger proportion of total expenditures was allocated to food by the families who had lower level of living scores than by the families who had higher scores.

Community facilities and services were readily available. The average distance from the homes to a gravel road was less than half a mile. Eighty-two per cent of the homes were located on a rural mail delivery route. The average distance to a school was 2.5 miles and to a church, community hall and doctor, 3 miles. Hospitals were farther away; the average distance was 17 miles but 28 per cent of the homes were more than 20 miles from a hospital.

The families spent much of their spare time in their homes. Most of the family reading was confined to newspapers and periodicals. Forty-four per cent of the household heads and 36 per cent of the housewives reported that they devoted four or more hours per week to reading. Only six per cent of the families obtained books from a library. Nearly every family had entertained visitors and had visited away from home during the year.

Only 18 per cent of the families did not belong to a community organization. Every family member over 16 years of age had attended church more than 20 times during the year.

All but one of the housewives reported that they would rather live on a farm than in an urban centre. Many of them felt, however, that farm life would be much more pleasant if their homes were provided with modern conveniences. The majority were of the opinion that the farm was not only a better place for bringing up children than a town or city but, also, that it offered greater independence.

APPENDIX

Table 1.- Items Used in Level of Living Scale

Item	Level of Living Score
1. House construction:	
(1) Brick, stone, frame (stucco), frame (painted or brick veneer), or frame (stained shingle)	1
(2) All other types of construction, such as frame (unpainted or unstained shingle), or log	0
2. Rooms per person:	
(1) One or more rooms per person	1
(2) Less than one room per person	0
3. Storm windows:	
(1) For some or all windows	1
(2) None	0
4. Basement:	
(1) Full or part basement with concrete or stone walls and floor	1
(2) Full or part basement with earth walls and floor, or no basement	0
5. Heating system:	
(1) Furnace or space heater in basement	1
(2) Space heater in room, or kitchen stove only source of heat	0
6. Lighting:	
(1) Electricity, or gasoline, or kerosene mantle lamps	1
(2) Wick lamps only	0
7. Cistern	1
8. Pumping system:	
(1) Running water, or power or hand operated pump at well	1
(2) No pumping system	0

Item	Level of Living Score
9. Kitchen sink	1
10. Bathroom	1
11. Washing machine:	
(1) Power operated machine	1
(2) Hand operated washer, or no washing machine	0
12. Telephone	1
13. Clothes closets:	
(1) One or more	1
(2) None	0
14. Dining room (in addition to a kitchen)	1
15. Dining room table, buffet, or china cabinet	1
16. Chesterfield, davenport, or lounge	1
17. Easy chair	1
18. Bookcase or desk	1
19. Books:	
(1) Ten or more books, excluding school books	1
(2) Less than ten books	0
20. Piano	1
21. Floor construction:	
(1) Hardwood or softwood flooring throughout all or part of the house	1
(2) Rough flooring only	0
22. Kitchen floor finish:	
(1) Linoleum	1
(2) All other types of finish, or unfinished	0

Item	Level of Living Score
23. Living room floor finish:	
(1) Linoleum, paint, varnish, or wax	1
(2) All other types of finish, or unfinished	0
24. Living room wall finish:	
(1) Wallpaper, paint, or calcimine over plaster or plasterboard	1
(2) Other types of finish, or unfinished	0
25. Woodwork finish:	
(1) Painted or varnished throughout all or part of the house	1
(2) Unfinished	0
26. Daily or weekly newspapers:	
(1) Daily newspaper for six months or more, or three or more weekly newspapers	1
(2) Less than three weekly newspapers	0
27. Magazine subscriptions:	
(1) Two or more	1
(2) Less than two	0
Total possible score on 27 item scale	27

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